

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## Mozambique to restore 185,000 hectares of mangrove forests

The Mozambican government and its partners plan to restore 185,000 hectares of mangrove forest in the central provinces of Sofala and Zambezia as part of the sustainable management of ecosystems.

This was formalised on 7 February in Maputo when the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries (MIMAIP) and Blue Forest, a Dubai based non-profit organisation set up to create sustainable environmental solutions, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost mangrove restoration.

The MoU was signed by the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Xavier Munjovo, and Blue Forest chief executive, Vahid Fotuhi. Under the agreement, between 50 and 100 million trees will be planted as part of this long-term partnership. This project will offset approximately 200,000 tons of CO2 emissions annually, equivalent to taking 50,000 cars off the road.

Quoted in a press release from Blue Forest, Munjovo pointed out that "Mozambique has over 300,000 hectares of mangroves along its coast, which is one of the largest tracts of mangrove forest in Africa. We are delighted to partner with Blue Forest and to introduce innovative technology in the way we map and restore our vital mangrove forests for generations to come."

Fotuhi added that "Mozambique is a hugely strategic country when it comes to mangrove forests. We are thrilled to partner with MIMAIP and to work in coordination with all the public and private national and provincial institutions, as well as the local communities in Sofala and Zambezia on this historic project. Tens of thousands of people and endless marine life will benefit from this project".

According to Blue Forest, high-resolution satellite imagery, LiDAR technology and remote sensing data will be used to identify hot spots where the need for restoration is highest. Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms will then be "used to decipher the satellite data and field measurement to

customise the reforestation activities in an accurate, efficient, and transparent manner".

The project will be financed through carbon credits that will be generated through the reforestation and conservation activities over the thirty year period of the partnership. The proceeds will be shared between the local and national stakeholders as per the guidelines set by the National Fund for Sustainable Development.

According to estimates, about two thirds of the Mozambican population lives along the coast and depend on mangroves for building material and domestic fuel (charcoal and firewood).

### Police seize 102 kilos of heroin

Mozambican police on 11 February detained a man in Mocuba district, in the central province of Zambezia, who they caught in possession of 102 kilogrammes of heroin.

According to a report in the news sheet "Carta de Mocambique", agents of the National Criminal Investigation Service (Sernic) also seized several mobile phones and passports.

The arrested man told the police that he was taking the heroin to Malawi. The drug was hidden in a false bottom of his vehicle. He claimed that he was "only the transporter" and admitted to having crossed Mozambique's borders ten times in January and February.

This was the second large seizure of heroin in less than a fortnight. On 6 February at Ressano Garcia, on the border with South Africa, a truck was stopped and found to be carrying heroin valued at six million rands (US\$ 391,000).

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This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact [pfauvet@live.com](mailto:pfauvet@live.com)

## **Captured terrorists assisting armed forces**

The Minister of Defence, Cristovao Chume, told reporters on 9 February that terrorists captured in operations in the northern province of Cabo Delgado are cooperating with the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM) and their allies.

According to Chume, “some of the terrorists are working with our forces and those of SADC (Southern African Development Community) and Rwanda”. They are revealing the location of jihadist bases and the sites of arms caches.

Chume was speaking to journalists shortly after the Cape Verdean Colonel Armindo Alcides Nogueira Sá Miranda took office as the new director of the Maputo-based Centre for Strategic Analysis of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

The Minister said that suspected terrorists are first interrogated, but those who are found not to have terrorist links are released and re-inserted into their communities.

Asked about the legal justification for arming local militias to help the armed forces in the defence of Cabo Delgado, Chume said “those people, during the armed national liberation struggle, freed the people, they freed this country. They are the same people who today are once again are taking up arms to support our communities and our country”.

Chume pointed out that these fighters asked the government for guns to defend their villages and their work “is bringing about the desired results”.

Some lawyers have argued that arming civilians is illegal and that the Mozambican state could be held responsible for the acts of these militias. Chume urged the lawyers to support the government and all those involved in the fight against terrorism, in order to search for “the best legal solutions”. He added that he was not dismissing legal issues, but in Cabo Delgado the country was facing matters of life or death.

## **EU pledges support against terrorism**

Mozambique will receive multiple forms of support from the European Union (EU) including equipment, training, and capacity building for the defence and security forces fighting terror attacks in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

Addressing reporters on 9 February at the end of a three day visit to EU headquarters in Brussels, President Filipe Nyusi said that joint efforts by the Mozambican defence and security forces, Rwandan troops, and the Southern African

Development Community (SADC) Military Mission (SAMIM) involve high costs that one way or another must be paid.

President Nyusi acknowledged that the support granted by SADC states will not last forever due to the costs involved. Therefore, it is important to carry out diplomatic efforts to ensure further support to avert the risk of failure of the mission.

The fierce intensity of the recent allied military offensives has forced the terrorists to set up new hideouts or disperse. This success could lead to attacks spilling over into neighbouring provinces such as Niassa.

President Nyusi stated that he had informed the European Union about Mozambique’s firm determination to defeat the terrorists and guarantee state security and the return of displaced people to their places of origin.

## **Terrorists driven out of Pundanhar**

The Mozambican defence and security forces and their Rwandan allies, on 7 and 8 February carried out operations to secure the areas of Nica de Rovuma and Pundanhar in Palma district, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. Pundanhar lies about 55 kilometres from the district capital Palma.

According to a statement from the Rwandan Defence Ministry, these areas were recently occupied by Islamist terrorists “as temporary hideouts, as they sought to undertake operations to retake territories lost during the initial offensive by the joint forces conducted last year”.

The Rwandan statement added that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Military Mission (SAMIM) “were also alerted for support in blocking the enemy fleeing towards their area of responsibility”.

The Rwandan Joint Task Force commander, Maj-Gen Inocencio Kabandana, visited the troops in Pundanhar shortly after the area had been secured to congratulate them.

On 24 March last year, the terrorists seized Palma town, displacing many thousands of its inhabitants. The Afungi Peninsula, in Palma district, is the site of a major liquefied natural gas (LNG) project run by a consortium headed by the French company TotalEnergies. In the wake of the terrorist attack, TotalEnergies withdrew all its staff but promised to resume work on the LNG project once “sustainable security” had been restored to Palma.

About 40,000 people returned to Palma town, once it had been retaken by the Mozambican and Rwandan forces. Many others have yet to return to other parts of the district.

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## **President Nyusi inaugurates photo-voltaic power station**

President Filipe Nyusi on 2 February inaugurated a photo-voltaic power station in the Ngapa administrative post, in Mueda district in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The power station was built by the National Energy Fund (FUNAE), at a cost of 140.8 million meticaís (US\$2.2 million) and is part of the government's drive to electrify all administrative posts by 2024.

Speaking at the event, President Nyusi said "with this inauguration, we want to show the strategic importance of renewable sources of energy in the sustainable development of the country".

The President stressed that the government is gradually bringing electricity to all parts of the country, and is replacing all the old, diesel-fired generating systems to protect the environment and mitigate climate change. He added that "we are working to approve legislation that opens up room for more investment in the sector, increasing the availability of electricity and reducing the price in favour of the end consumers".

The electrification of the administrative posts is part of the government's "Energy for All" programme that aims to ensure universal access to electricity by 2030. In January, President Nyusi reiterated that the government will meet its target of bringing electricity to ten million Mozambicans by 2024. That would increase the national electricity coverage to 64 per cent of the population, compared with 44 per cent in late 2021.

## **US government donates 840,000 Covid-19 vaccines**

The United States Government has donated an additional 840,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine to Mozambique, as part of its commitment to support equitable access to vaccines worldwide. Unlike most other Covid-19 vaccines, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine has the advantage that only one dose is required to confer immunity.

With this delivery, US government donations of the vaccine to Mozambique have risen to over 4.3 million doses. They are part of the coordinated assistance to support the country's response to Covid-19 and strengthen resilience to the virus and its variants, according to a press release issued on 14 February by the US Embassy.

The US\$80 million in US assistance given so far to combat Covid-19 includes providing urgent supplies that support infection prevention and

control; improving the capacity of Mozambican laboratories and health facilities; and improving Covid-19 surveillance, response, and case management. It also covers activities such as developing and enhancing public health outreach, risk communication and community engagement; and supporting the deployment of the Covid-19 vaccine across the country.

The United States has committed four billion doses to the COVAX Facility, becoming the largest donor to the global effort to vaccinate people around the world. The US government has also purchased one billion vaccines for low-income countries and donated 80 million vaccines from its own supplies.

## **Fishermen fined two million meticaís for operating during closed season**

The Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries has imposed fines of over two million meticaís (US\$38,000) on fishermen across the country caught violating the closed fishing season for mangrove crabs and surface water prawns, which runs from November until the end of March.

Delivering the mid-term assessment marking a hundred days of the closed season, the Ministry's National Director of Operations, Leonid Chimarizene, told reporters on 11 February in Maputo that the inspectors also seized unlawfully fished catch and destroyed banned fishing gear.

He pointed out that "between 1 November and 10 February, 466 inspection missions visited 688 fishing sites and inspected 4,139 sets of fishing gear. Of these, 578 were seized and 456 destroyed, as the nets' mesh did not comply with the standards".

These inspections led to the seizure of 1.3 tonnes of crabs, but as the species can live for considerable amounts of time outside of its natural habitat the authorities returned many of the crustaceans to the sea. Inspectors seized 12.7 tonnes of prawns, of which seven tonnes have been auctioned so far.

During the period 23 tonnes of other fishery produce that were seized and sold at public auction. The Ministry also seized 18 vehicles in Sofala, Zambezia, and Nampula and six fishing boats.

Chimarizene added that the current legislation is currently being reviewed to make accountable not only the fisherman breaking the laws, but also the transporters and the buyers.

Chimarizene noted that 450,000 artisanal fishermen are operating along the country's coastline and that the majority are using harmful fishing gear.

## **Inflation over two per cent in January**

Average prices in Mozambique rose by 2.18 per cent in January, according to the National Statistics Institute (INE), drawing on the consumer price indices of the three largest cities (Maputo, Nampula and Beira).

This pushed annual inflation (1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022) to 7.8 per cent - the highest inflation rate for January since 2017. The annual rate has been rising steadily from just over four per cent a year ago, to 5.52 per cent in June, 6.04 per cent in September, 6.74 per cent in December, and now 7.8 per cent.

The main price rises in January were for tomatoes (21.9 per cent), coconuts (15.5 per cent), urban passenger transport (9.3 per cent), rice (6.2 per cent), and secondhand cars (5.1 per cent).

Prices for a few goods declined over the month – lemons by 16.1 per cent, fresh prawns by 6.2 per cent, and live chickens by 5.5 per cent.

Of the three cities, Beira had the highest price rises in January (2.6 per cent), followed by Maputo (2.29 per cent), and Nampula (1.69 per cent).

## **Prime Minister urges businessmen to invest in Mozambique**

Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosario has urged businesspeople from the United Arab Emirates to seize investment opportunities in Mozambique in areas such as hydrocarbons, renewable energy, agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, and the development of the country's industrial park.

Speaking in Dubai on 7 February at the Business Forum between Mozambique and United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Prime Minister said that the forum, bringing together businessmen and political decision-makers, is a unique opportunity for both sides to increase commercial and economic relations.

The Prime Minister added that “Mozambique has a wide variety of natural resources including natural gas. The exploitation of these resources must be carried out in a sustainable manner to guarantee balanced economic and social development”. He stressed areas such as agriculture, fisheries, energy, tourism, infrastructure, logistics, transport, and industrialisation have been selected as strategic sectors in a bid to diversify the country's economy and promote inclusive and sustainable development.

The event took place within the framework of Expo-Dubai 2020, and the Prime Minister pointed out that Expo-Dubai is a window for Mozambique's business projects in several areas of mutual interest. The government, he stressed, is committed to ensuring macroeconomic stability through the implementation of appropriate monetary and fiscal measures. Over the last few years, Mozambique recorded average annual inflation of less than ten per cent, and in 2021 it stood at around five per cent. This has enabled stability in exchange rates and general price levels. The government, he added, is also strengthening public management transparency, and fighting corruption through the implementation of legal and administrative reforms.

## **Prime Minister calls for sustainable airports**

Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosario on 2 February stressed that the country's airports should be profitable in order to guarantee their economic sustainability.

He was speaking after swearing into office Americo Muchanga as the new chairperson of the Mozambican Airports Company (ADM). He takes over from Emmanuel Chaves who had headed the company since April 2013.

The Prime Minister said that the resumption of economic activity around the world as countries lift the restrictive measures imposed in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic “is an opportunity to relaunch the potential of our national airports to attract more aviation operators”.

He challenged Muchanga to continue the investments currently underway to modernise and expand the airports, which will allow “a better response to the new dynamics of the country's development”.

The mission of ADM, he added, is not only to guarantee modernisation but also to ensure the efficient and effective management of the airports and the air navigation services.

Muchanga said he is determined to work for the growth of the company and civil aviation in Mozambique. He told reporters he is sure that the airports have human resources who can rise to the challenges laid down by the Prime Minister. “I have the obligation to work with the senior staff already there so that we can create solutions and make our company and our country grow”, he declared.

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